I. Executive Summary _____

King County made significant technology governance changes during 2001. To establish more rigor around technology advancement, operations, and management, the County determined that a comprehensive strategic technology plan was needed. The stated purpose of the plan is "to set direction for the next three years."

Prior to beginning work on the plan, the County's Chief Information Officer had already established an overarching direction for technology improvements. This direction calls for investments to shift toward integrating systems and increasing access to systems through the use of the Web. This strategic plan builds from these premises and is specifically oriented toward deploying technologies to help implement agency business plans — and ultimately to improve service delivery to the public, employees, business partners, and other governments.

Six strategic principles, presented in Section III of this plan, guide the County's 2002 Strategic Technology Plan. First is central review and coordination of information technology — the need to bring together and manage the County's technology investment more effectively with an enterprise-wide view. Second is seeing information technology as enabling more effective and efficient delivery of services whereby sound business cases precede technology expenditures and are then managed to correspond with direct and measurable performance results. Third, the establishment of information technology standards will guide all key aspects of technology resource management. Fourth is access to information and services where seamless self-service will be a standard way of conducting business. Fifth is the need for business process improvements that will conform with industry best practices. The sixth and last principle pertains to privacy and security, addressing the critical need to protect the County's information resources and the privacy of both employees and the public. The common thread unifying these six guiding principles is the migration from an agency-based environment to an integrated enterprise architecture. Each of the recommended strategies resulting from this planning effort, if implemented, will improve the County's technology environment under the direction of one or more of the guiding principles. Each guiding principle is discussed below along with the recommended strategies that most closely tie to that principle.

A. Central Review and Coordination of Information Technology

The premise behind this guiding principle is simple. The County's ability to successfully manage technology resources is dependent upon a more centralized and coordinated approach to building, operating, and maintaining current and future technology assets. The anticipated fewer redundancies and strengthened planning and resource allocation will reduce duplicative costs, help ensure compatibility of systems and result in a more deliberately focused, uniform, and cost-effective information systems architecture. Several strategies contained in this plan tie to this principle. These are:

- Develop technology design/plans for significant initiatives and projects.
- Establish a comprehensive project management program.
- Reorganize technology functions around the County.
- Strengthen technology management and delivery capabilities through specialized training.
- Consolidate hardware around the County.

B. *Information Technology as Enabling More Effective and Efficient Delivery of Services*

This principle directly relates to the need for the County to strengthen its funding and investment processes that will thereby place technology expenditures in an overall policy framework supported by effective governance processes. Technology investments should be based on sound business cases, cost/benefit analyses and measurable results – all of which should be scrutinized by the current technology governance structure. Specific effort should be made to manage disbursements in the area of legacy systems where returns are more difficult to measure and the potential for payback continues to diminish over time. The strategies related to this principle include:

- Purchase and integrate top-quality commercially packaged software wherever possible and cost-effective — and with minimal customization.
- Use broadband technology and a fully integrated PBX architecture as the future centerpiece to converge data, voice, and video transport.
- Institutionalize performance measurement for technology.
- Establish a comprehensive asset management function.

C. *Information Technology Standards*

Standardization of technology assets, methodologies, development, operations and training across the County will yield significant results in improved performance, efficiency and cost avoidance. Through adherence to industry best practices, the standards defined in the governance process will allow the County to move ahead with more effective and uniform management. The results of this more consistent and intentional approach to technology standardization will also reduce the risk related to the implementation of larger projects pending at the County. Strategies addressing this principle include:

- Utilize service-level agreements as a standard way of doing business.
- Develop standard operating procedures to guide all agencies' technology staff.
- Standardize technology including infrastructure, hardware, and applications software.
- Institute Countywide best practices for enterprise data management.
- Standardize County technical approach for application integration.
- Implement a standardized integrated portfolio of enterprise Financial and HR/Payroll applications.

D. *Access to Information and Services*

A core component of the business of the County is to provide access to information and services. Increased ease of use and self-sufficiency in this endeavor may be promoted though an increased use of Web-based technologies that may reduce costs associated with providing public services over time. Secure, reliable and user-friendly public information access through Internet-based methods (as opposed to walk-ins, mail and phone traffic) will position the County to serve the public in a more responsive and effective manner. Expanded use of the County intranet and extranet will also enable staff and business partners to benefit from the up-to-date and readily accessible information brought about through these technologies.

This principle is addressed in the following strategies:

- Standardize Web-based technology used on the intranet, Internet, and extranet.
- Use the Internet as a primary mechanism to deliver public information and services.
- Promote and support the development of the employee intranet and partner extranet to improve information services and business process support.

E. Business Process Improvement

The optimization and redesign of business processes used throughout the County is necessary to more quickly and completely reap the full benefits available through technological enhancement. In contrast to the current "business as usual" approach, this will provide highest and best use of staff through the improvements provided in more modern systems. The study noted several points where business processes are out of synch with the County's technology investment, thereby reducing the return on expenditures. Technology should be a part of a comprehensive business solution that would include careful business analysis and design. Strategies related to current deficiencies in this area include:

- Reorganize the help desk function around a more centralized, streamlined, and coordinated model.
- Utilize the State of Washington's Digital Academy to promote learning.
- Design and implement a common architecture to integrate workflow between law, safety, and justice agencies.

F. Privacy and Security

Privacy and security have quickly become fundamental concerns in the field of information technology. The drastically increased connectivity and collaboration that new systems provide also lead to striking oversights in protecting both the privacy of the public and the confidentiality, integrity and availability of County data and resources. It is recommended that all facets of the technology architecture and processes at the County must in some way address security and privacy. Proper technical, operational, policy and managerial improvements will significantly decrease the County's risk. While cost savings are difficult to provide short term, a more conscious and centralized approach to these issues could lead to significant avoidance of loss – both financially and in the area of public confidence. This principle is addressed in these strategies:

- Strengthen system security.
- Strengthen business continuity capabilities.

By proceeding under the six guiding principles, the County will move to the next level of effective technology usage and deployment. No single principle stands on its own in the advancement of technology, as each is reliant upon the others for success. When careful planning is consistently aligned with the business goals of the County and these principles, the County will be positioned to achieve a lasting return on technology investments. A more deliberate and intentional enterprise information systems approach based on a centralized business model will make highest and best use of current and future technology assets, and aid the County in serving the public in the most effective and efficient ways possible.

Having summarized the County's strategic technology plan in the context of the policy framework of the guiding principles, this report, in the following sections, discusses in detail the ideas presented. First is a definition of the County's vision statement — a commitment that will provide direction in technology services and design. The vision is followed by the list of guiding principles that will govern decisions in this area. Following the principles, the County's business environment is described using goals, objectives, directions, opportunities and issues from agency business plans. A comprehensive description of the County's technology environment is then presented, with findings, strengths and weaknesses covering the crucial areas of service delivery, operations, architecture, management and organization, and funding. Lastly, strategies and transition plans are presented to outline the immediate and long-term directions for the County. This document is to be used for resource forecasting and strategy and is not intended for use as an implementation plan. In aggregate, this strategic technology plan provides a recommended road map for the County to follow over the next three years to become a more successful information systems enterprise.